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SUBJECT: Communication Comments Re APPLETREE CE Review

1. One general feature which seems to be common to many instances of controlled operations was brought out in the review. This feature is the unconscious effort on the part of all concerned to rationalize the appearance of security checks when used to indicate control. Such a reaction is natural when considered in terms of the case officer's identification with the Agent. Obviously, however, the interpretation of security checks in terms of such a rationalization negates the entire purpose of such checks.



2. A review of the Communications reports on the radio operators concerned indicates those security checks issued by Communications representatives were not well chosen. It is extremely doubtful if the majority of these could have been utilized without the consent and knowledge of the controlling force. For example, one of the cryptographic control signals required base to confirm the receipt of such a signal. The publication of  has eliminated the basis for this erroneous selection.

3. It appears that the base was slightly overanxious to accept forgetfulness as the reason for the failure of FIEND/2 to include his cryptographic negative control signal in the message transmitted 3 December 1952. He had used the signal correctly for seven months and it is unlikely he would forget after an extensive and intensive period of use.

4. The base station could have been much more suspicious of the introduction of a new "fist" (3 November 1952). Inasmuch as base had no records for comparison, their assumption that FIEND/2 was using his left hand does not appear to have been justified. The appearance of a new "fist" should have resulted in a definite tendency to view all further actions with suspicion.

5. In summary, the selection of security checks for this operation was not of the best. The danger of this was further multiplied by the feature noted in paragraph 1 above. The result of these effects is that knowledge of control does not become apparent until there is an overt action on the part of the controlling forces.

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Chief, Communications Security Division

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